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## EXPERT ADMINISTRATORS IN POPULAR GOVERNMENT

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Presidents, governors and mayors certainly cannot be experts in all the matters with which they are called upon to deal, nor, as a rule, are they thoroughly expert in any of them; and in fact this is generally true of officers elected to administer public affairs. We cannot, therefore, avoid the question whether they do, or do not, need expert assistance if the government is to be efficiently conducted. The problem is not new, for the world struggled with it two thousand years ago. The fate of institutions has sometimes turned upon it, and so may the great experiment we are trying today—that of the permanence of democracy on a large scale. Americans pay little heed to the lessons taught by the painful experience of other lands, and Charles Sumner expressed a common sentiment when he remarked sarcastically his thankfulness that they knew no history in Washington. Our people have an horizon so limited, a knowledge of the past so small, a self-confidence so sublime, a conviction that they are altogether better than their fathers so profound, that they hardly realize the difficulty of their task. We assume unconsciously, as a witty writer has put it, that human reason began about thirty years ago; and yet a candid study of history shows that the essential qualities of human nature have not changed radically; that men have little more capacity or force of character than at other favored epochs. Some improvement in standards has, no doubt, taken place, and certainly the bounds of human sympathy have widened vastly; but there has been no such transformation as to justify a confidence that the men of the present day can accomplish easily and without sacrifice what to earlier generations was unattainable.

A means of making democracy on a large scale possible in the modern world, although it had not proved so in the past, was thought to have been found in the device of representation. This was supposed to enable a large country to govern itself as small communities alone had hitherto succeeded in doing. But the faith in representative government as a universal means of solving political problems has declined markedly in America, and the conditions under which it has worked must be improved or it will not by itself bring us to our goal. It is well then to inquire whether there were not other defects in the older forms of democracy which are still with us, and which a calmer judgment, an unimpassioned study of political phenomena, may help us to remove. In doing so we ought not to forget that the century during which democracy on a large scale has endured is a brief span in history, and offers no conclusive proof of the deeper currents of human destiny, that in seeking to solve the riddle of man's social organization we must take long views, and not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the clamor, the complaints and the enthusiasms of the moment in which we live.

No profound knowledge of history is needed to perceive that the republics of the ancient world made very little use of experts in the public service. The two of which we know by far the most are those of Athens and of Rome; and in some important respects their methods of dealing with public office were similar, since in both the officers were appointed, as a rule, for a single year, and were practically not reëligible. The theories of democracy, as then understood, were carried farthest in Athens, where most of the offices were collegiate and many of them were filled, not by election, but by lot, every free citizen being deemed fit to occupy any civic position in the state. Under these conditions, an official could have no expert knowledge of the work to be done in his department, however familiar he might be with the discussion of political questions in the assembly; nor could he in the short space of a year acquire any considerable experience in the management of his office. In short, the administration was conducted by amateurs. Nor were these men assisted by expert subordinates or advisers. There were, no doubt, slaves in the service of

the state, to do the purely routine work of keeping accounts and the like, and sometimes, at least, a professional architect was appointed to plan a public building; but as a rule all administrative work involving the exercise of discretion was performed by citizens holding office for a year only, without any aid from experts or persons familiar by experience with the duties of the position. There appear to have been no government engineers for constructing roads, no naval architects, no professional generals, no expert financial officers. The collection and expenditure of the revenues, the direction of a war, and the fitting out of the fleet, were entrusted to unskilled men selected in most cases by lot. Such a system was considered by the Greeks themselves essential to democracy for it tended to proclaim and preserve the equality of all the citizens. It did not work badly in a simple community where the various branches of the public service involved few things with which an ordinary citizen might not be familiar in his daily life, and of course it worked well while a Pericles directed the affairs of state outside of public office, as a sort of glorified boss. But the system was hardly equal to a severe strain, and we may safely assume that it contributed to the downfall of Athens before the blows of a highly organized monarchy of the same race under Philip of Macedon.

The Romans carried both the theory and the practice of democracy less far than the Greeks, yet the principle of rotation in office was rigidly applied, and the result, very different from that in Athens, has a more direct lesson for us. Under the republic the officials were chosen only for a single year, and as a rule were not reëlected. It is true that the government was in the hands of a ruling class, and that no one could hold a higher magistracy who had not previously filled the lower ones in the official ladder, so that the higher officers had enjoyed some experience in public affairs; but no single office was held by anyone more than one year, and there was nothing remotely resembling a permanent civil service. Every man was quite new to the administrative office he might fill, and left it before he had time to learn much more than he knew when he came in. This constitution worked well enough so long as Rome was a small Italian state with simple

industries and few foreign complications; but when she acquired dominions beyond the seas, when the contact with the East destroyed her old traditions of discipline, when instead of governing a small town and an agricultural district, her people were called upon to rule a huge metropolis, to administer vast provinces, to regulate the commercial affairs and control the political destinies of the western world, the system broke down.

After the lack of experts in the public service began to be of serious consequence Rome, unlike Athens, came into conflict with no people at all her match in political or military qualities, and the republic was brought to an end, not by external forces, but by internal weakness and constitutional instability. Of course there were other causes contributing to its downfall; of course it is easy to point to particular men at whose hands the constitution suffered violence; of course it is impossible to distinguish sharply between the occasion and the underlying cause; but surely it is abundantly clear that government by a succession of amateurs, without expert assistance, had proved itself hopelessly incapable of maintaining an orderly administration on so gigantic a scale. The state had outgrown its machinery, and the empire by creating a new organization prolonged its life.

Augustus and his earlier successors had no idea of setting up a bureaucracy to administer their dominions. In the main they merely took over, as each exigency arose and without a definite plan, those matters that were in sore need of attention. The former transitory officials of the senatorial class being unable to cope with the great problems of the day, one duty after another passed into the control of the head of the state and his personal subordinates; and it took three centuries to complete the process. Meanwhile the administrative machinery for dealing with these matters was being gradually developed, again, not on a deliberate systematic plan, but in the earlier stages, at least, by adopting the means nearest at hand. During the century following Augustus, the emperors used for this purpose to a great extent the freedmen attached to their own households and trained to conduct their private affairs on a large scale; but as time went on these were replaced by free citizens, drawn for the upper grades of the serv-

ice from the order of knights, and thus a permanent civil service grew up, which men of ability entered young and followed for life as a career.<sup>1</sup> It is this administrative system apparently derived in part from the practice of the Egyptian monarchy, that produced and crystallized the forms of Roman law and government. The preservation of the Roman dominions for so long a period, as well as the far longer life of the eastern empire, must be attributed in great part to the adoption of the imperial form of government with its large use of trained expert officials; and to the same source must be ascribed also the mastering influence of Roman civilization upon the modern world.

Throughout the middle ages, and indeed until a hundred and fifty years ago, democracies were small, or turbulent and ephemeral. Venice was, no doubt, a powerful and prosperous republic for many centuries, but far from being democratic, was an aristocracy of a restricted type and furnishes no exception to the general rule that democracies have in the past been small or short-lived. At the close of the middle ages the great states of modern Europe began to assume their present form, and in every case they were ruled by monarchs who employed not officials appointed for short terms, and replacing one another by rotation, but men whom they retained permanently and who were skilled in the art of administration. The new monarchies meant government by experts, and that was one of the chief secrets of their efficiency and predominance.

Now the fact that monarchies have habitually employed permanent administrators, while democracies have shown a preference for rotation in office, is not an accident. It is a natural result of the different principles on which the two forms of government are based. The use of experts is as normal in a monarchy or an aristocracy as it is foreign to the genius of a democracy. A monarch tends to retain in office the men he has learned to know and trust, who have become experienced in carrying on his business. If he is jealous, irritable or captious, he may quarrel with them from time to time, or if something goes wrong he may

<sup>1</sup> *Die Kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian.* Otto Hirschfeld, 2d Ed. 1905. See especially the concluding chapter.

make a scapegoat of one of them, but in the long run he saves himself trouble and worry by keeping about him the servants whom he has found faithful and efficient; and he does so whether he is himself good or bad. If he is good, he retains good men; if bad, men who will carry out his evil designs; but in any case men faithful to him. The head of a great industrial enterprise would not think of changing his subordinates every year or two. Whether honest or corrupt, whether generous or oppressive, he wants under him men who have proved themselves efficient for his purposes; and a monarch is in the same position. He keeps his servants so long as he is satisfied with them; and if one of his chief officers dies he is inclined to fill the place with a man who has made his mark in a lower post. His ministers, being permanent, are prone for the same reason to retain their own subordinates, promoting them to higher places as they show the ability, or subservience, required; and thus a monarchy tends to produce a corps of expert administrators in every department, its public service becoming a career which a man enters young and follows through life. The service is not always good; it may become stagnant or rigid, and its members negligent, oppressive or corrupt. There have been admirable bureaucracies, and there have been execrable ones, but even the worst of them have shown a certain durability derived from the expert character of their members. In spite of the gravest vices they have given to the governments they have served a permanence beside which the democracies that existed on a large scale until a hundred years ago have seemed ephemeral.

Permanence in the tenure of public office is, on the other hand, unnatural to a democracy. The habit of repeated reëlection is, indeed, occasionally found—especially where a strong infusion of aristocratic feeling persists under popular forms, as in some of the rural cantons of Switzerland—but in general democracies tend, as in Athens, to frequent changes in office. This is partly because the people are afraid of losing their power or freedom under permanent officials; and in this connection it is interesting to compare the popular distrust of permanent administrators in America with the absence, until the last few years, of any wide-

spread popular distrust of professional politicians, a difference largely due to the fact that the politicians mix with and court the people, taking pains to appear on a level with them, while the permanent official stands apart and remote. A boss, it is true, sometimes holds himself aloof, but then he distributes favors and is regarded as a benign special providence.

Another reason for the democratic dislike of permanence of tenure grows from an insistence upon equality, to be demonstrated by giving every man a substantial chance to take part in the administration of public affairs. Men desire not only to be well governed, but also to feel that they are governing themselves, and the readiest way of reaching this result is to throw the offices open to all aspirants. We do not need to go back to the ancient world to learn a common principle of human nature. We can look about us. Among our forefathers, as among the Greeks, rotation in office was a corollary of democracy, and while the word has become obnoxious the practice has not lost its attractions. Rotation in office is based upon the same principle as the use of the lot in Athens, for it purports to give each man an equal chance at office, and to ensure the control of public affairs by public opinion. It is, perhaps, the simplest, but not necessarily the sole or the best, method of securing that control, and one may wisely inquire whether it is not inconsistent with efficiency, and whether some more effective method of attaining the result cannot be found.

The first question, therefore, is whether experts are as much needed in modern governments as they have been in large states in the past; and the answer must clearly be that they are needed much more. The habit of frequent changes of officials, which means administration by persons without special skill in the public duties they undertake, may work well enough in a small, primitive community, such as Athens in her earlier days, or New England a century ago, or the western frontier settlements at a later time; where the common experience of ordinary men was such as to fit them to deal intelligently with the plain questions that came before the public officer. It worked well enough under the conditions that enabled a private citizen to take up a new business at any time without previous preparation.



Now in private affairs we have reached a stage where the complexity of civilization, the growth of accurate knowledge, the progress of invention, and the keenness of competition which renders a high degree of efficiency alone profitable, have brought about the specialization of occupations. We no longer believe in America today that a man who has shown himself fairly clever at something else, is thereby qualified to manage a railroad, a factory, or a bank. Are we better justified in assuming that an election by popular vote, or an appointment by a chief magistrate, confers, without apprenticeship, an immediate capacity to construct the roads and bridges, direct the education, manage the finances, purify the water supply, or dispose of the sewage of a large city; and this when it is almost certain that the person selected will not remain in office long enough to learn thoroughly a business of which he knows little or nothing at the outset? In industrial enterprise, in business concerns, the use of experts of all kinds is, indeed, constantly increasing. They have revolutionized some industries, and are indispensable in many more. Nor do we merely seek for men who have gained experience in practice. In one profession after another we have learned to train them carefully in the theory of their work, taking them young and educating them for it as a distinct career. Sixty years ago, for example, there was scarcely a school of engineering in the country, but now they are everywhere, and they can hardly turn out students fast enough to supply the demand. They are ever adding new departments, while our universities are creating new specialized schools, and thus adding to the number of professions. We are training men today for all services but that of the public.

To the argument that the use of expert knowledge in private industries has been growing, and that the need thereof in the enlarging sphere of governmental action must be growing also, it will be answered that popular education has been greatly extended, and hence the capacity of the people to deal with public questions is larger than ever before. This is, of course, an important factor in the problem of popular government. Elementary education is so nearly universal and compulsory today, that illit-

eracy is fast disappearing among the voters everywhere; and we may assume that as time goes on the schools will become more efficient and thorough, although probably more specialized, than at present. But the bounds of human knowledge are growing faster than education. A Casaubon, who had mastered everything known in his day, has long been an impossibility; and with the vast progress of research in all fields, specialization in knowledge is daily becoming greater and greater. Hence we have every reason to believe that diffusion of information will not relieve the world of the need of experts; but that, on the contrary, the more men learn the more they will require the services of those who know the most about particular subjects.

It will be answered also that experts are used now for all professional work; that only a lawyer is made a government attorney or city solicitor, only a physician is appointed health officer, only an engineer is employed to design a steel bridge, only an architect to plan a public building. This is true; and it means that the great professions, which have secured general recognition in the community, have been strong enough to insist that strictly professional work must not be entrusted to men who have had no professional training or experience. So far as it goes that is good; but what do we mean by professional work? We do not in practice include all work requiring special knowledge or experience in order to be well done, for we apply the principle only in the case of a few leading professions. We do not insist or demand, for example, that our postmasters, our collectors of customs, our superintendents of streets, the administrators of our finances for the nation, state, or city, shall have any familiarity with the affairs they are to conduct, or any special qualifications for their duties; and yet these matters are often nearly as complex, and require nearly as much technical knowledge, as some of the recognized professions. They require quite as great skill as many positions in private employ to which one would not think of appointing an untrained man. Are we wise in entrusting such duties to a periodically shifting body of officials drawn for political motives from an inexperienced public? The question is not meant to imply that the political heads of departments

ought to be experts; for we need in the public service both expert and lay elements, and the latter may well take the form of a non-professional head to a department, provided he has under him thoroughly competent, permanent experts. But in many branches of the public service, central and local, we have no experts at all, no permanent officials playing an important part in the administration, and even in those matters, like legal, medical or engineering work, where experts are regularly employed, we rarely allow men to remain in office long enough to acquire that familiarity with their peculiar problems which confers efficiency and authority.

We are slowly making progress in these ways. The scientific departments at Washington are filled with men of the highest attainments, whom we may hope to see retained in spite of political changes. We have made progress also in civil service reform. Yet this practice, which was derived from England, was applied at first only to positions of the lower grade, where the work is mainly of a clerical or mechanical character. A vast benefit has been gained by taking these places out of the field of political patronage and party spoils; but the system has been applied very little to posts requiring the exercise of considerable administrative discretion. We cannot estimate what we have suffered in our great public departments, from the fact that we have not had permanent undersecretaries, thoroughly familiar with the business and its needs, and striving through a long period of years to improve the service. No cabinet officer holding his post for a single administration, or less, can possibly supply that want. It may be noted also that the United States is the only great nation with a popular government today which has not permanent officers of that kind, and it is they who keep the machinery of government elsewhere in working order.

If democracy is to be conducted with the efficiency needed in a complex modern society it must overcome its prejudice against permanent expert officials as undemocratic. It might as well be alleged that skilled engineers and modern inventions were undemocratic in war; that a true republic ought to go into battle with bows and arrows against machine guns worked by trained sol-

diers. In fact, the disadvantage at which our cities fight with great public service corporations is largely due to the difference in the calibre of the officials employed. What chance, for example, has a city represented by a solicitor, who is perhaps changed at every election, and is paid a small salary, against a great corporation which retains the best legal talent and pays for it many times as much? And what is true in a legal contest is true also of comparative efficiency in all directions. A democracy, like every other community, needs the best tools that it can find, and the expert of high grade is the best living tool of modern civilization.

#### EXPERTS IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The defects of American methods are most obvious in municipal government, for our failure there to attain anything approaching our ideal of democracy is beyond question. Future historians will have no difficulty in assigning a cause for American shortcomings in this quarter. They will point out that in Europe cities existed before the dawn of history; that the institutions of the Roman world developed in the main out of urban conditions, and were always deeply tinged with municipal ideas. They will note that in the middle ages, when the national organization was essentially feudal and rural, the cities had a vitality of their own and presented the nearest approach on a considerable scale to self-government. They will observe, in short, that urban administration is by no means a new thing in modern Europe. On the other hand, they will perceive that local government in America was at the outset almost entirely rural in character, and long continued to be mainly adapted to rural needs. The result is that while the problem of rural administration has given rise in the last half century to quite as serious consideration in Europe as the management of cities, this has been very far from the case in the United States, where local government, outside of the large towns, has followed a course so smooth that until scholars undertook a study of the subject, few men had any clear conception of rural institutions beyond their own section of the country.

The very absence of general discussion of the subject shows that, while there is a great diversity in the rural organization in different parts of the nation, each system has grown normally from prevailing conditions, and is fairly well suited to local needs; whereas in the case of municipal government, where conscious imitation has been far more common, discontent is well-nigh universal throughout the land.

In the charters of American cities the separation of executive and legislative organs, and the division of the latter into two branches, was copied from the state and national government, although these principles had no proper application, because a city government is essentially an administrative, not a legislative, concern. Moreover, wide as the divergence is today between the forms of rural and urban government in America, some principles appear to have been carried over from one to the other without regard to their fitness. The needs of a rural community are comparatively simple, and are readily understood by any intelligent man. This was particularly true half a century ago. The care of the roads and elementary schools, the assessment of taxes on farms and live stock, the impounding of stray cattle, were matters within the knowledge of everyone, and could be managed well enough by farmers of good sense chosen by their neighbors for the purpose. No special training was needed, no corps of experts; and rotation in office, if not too rapid, did not seriously interfere with efficiency. But such a custom is quite out of place in the administration of a large modern city, complicated as it must be by a variety of public services, most of which use the results of recent scientific discovery and mechanical invention. The problems arising in the supply of water, the disposal of sewage, the maintenance of streets and bridges with their numberless uses for wires and pipes as well as for travel, the provision for rapid transit, the elaborate system of public education, and the treatment of disease, pauperism and crime, are not matters with which even the most intelligent citizen is made familiar in the pursuit of his ordinary vocation. They can be mastered only by special study or long experience, and they can be dealt with efficiently only by persons who have mastered them.

It is generally admitted that our large cities are less well governed than those of Europe, and many wise men believe that we can learn something from their longer experience. But transplanted political institutions are likely to be barren unless the roots are carried with them. There are said to be monkeys in Africa so imitative that they copy faithfully the huts of men, and then live on the outside of them instead of the inside. Political imitation is not free from this danger of copying the obvious, while failing to perceive the essential, in the working of a foreign government. Now the vital difference between American and European cities, more fundamental than any outward form of organization, is the fact that municipal administration here is usually conducted by inexperienced temporary officers, whereas in Europe it is virtually in the hands of permanent experts, controlled to a greater or less extent, but never suppressed, by elected councils.

In Germany, a country where the bureaucracy does not seek shelter from the public gaze, the influence of expert officials in municipal government is self-evident. There is an elective city council, and the committees to which the various branches of the administration are entrusted contain unprofessional members; but the chief magistrate of the city, the burgomaster, is strictly a permanent professional administrator, and the business of the city is in the main conducted by him and by the other permanent officials for whom municipal work is a life-long career. In France and England the authority of the permanent officials is less apparent and one must look beneath the surface to see it. The statutes are, indeed, almost silent about their qualifications, their tenure and their duties, but in practice their influence is little less powerful because concealed.<sup>2</sup> In England the council and its committees purport to do everything. Yet by working through these committees and their chairmen, the town clerk, the borough surveyor, the tramway manager, the engineers of the water and gas works, and their colleagues practically carry

<sup>2</sup> For the influence of the permanent officials see Prof. W. B. Munro's *Municipal Government in Europe*; and for the English cities see also the writer's *Government of England*, chap. xl.

on the administration of the city; and in general it may be said that the excellence of the service is roughly in proportion to the strength of their influence. As in every other part of the British government, unwritten conventions are more powerful than formal organization, and while the forms are carefully observed and even paraded, the real forces work unseen in the background. For this reason observers often discover the action of the permanent officials in the government of an English city today as little as Montesquieu perceived the effect of the cabinet in restricting the personal authority of the king. Even the British public servant does not talk of it, and perhaps does not think much about it, until confronted by a system in which it is lacking, and then the contrast strikes him forcibly. Mr. Dalrymple, the manager of the Glasgow tramways, reported to the mayor of Chicago that it was hopeless for the city to think of operating the street railroads so long as the officials were appointed for short terms from political motives.

Until recently our municipal reformers have not appreciated the importance of this matter. They have fixed their attention mainly upon devices that would tend to promote the selection of good citizens for public office, and have not perceived clearly enough that the best elective officers are in the long run as helpless without good permanent administrators as the latter are with a bad mayor and council. Their failure to grasp this point is evident from the model city charter prepared by the National Municipal League. Read in the light of reports which explain it, that plan was certainly intended to encourage permanence of tenure by the heads of departments;<sup>3</sup> and yet under the arrangement proposed, they were highly unlikely to be men who devoted their lives to administrative service as a career. They could be removed, it is true, only with a statement setting forth the reasons therefor, which must not be their political opinions; but everyone knows that such a provision does not prevent removal for political reasons where the mayor has unrestricted power to appoint the successors. What sort of a position were they intended to occupy? In a small city it is conceivable, though unlikely,

<sup>3</sup> *A Municipal Program*, pp. 80-82.

that the mayor might be the sole executive officer who took part in politics, who held by an uncertain tenure, and that he should supervise a corps of permanent heads of departments. But in a large city this would be beyond his powers, and although there have been occasional cases of heads of departments in our large cities who have held office continuously for long periods through changes of administration, such cases have, for obvious reasons, been extremely rare. It is not impossible for a mayor to have a cabinet of non-professional, temporary lieutenants each of whom superintends one or more permanent officials in charge of departments as the English cabinet ministers superintend their permanent undersecretaries. In such a system, however, it is essential to distinguish clearly the positions of the layman and the expert; not to prescribe their duties minutely by statute, for that cannot be done, but to make the distinction itself obvious, to make it clear, by the absence of a substantial salary, or otherwise, that the temporary or political chief is not to administer the department himself, but merely to see that it is properly administered and to keep it in touch with public opinion. Now the model charter did not do this, but apparently assumed that the head of a department was to be the real administrative officer. Under these conditions it would probably not be easy, after the first flush of the reform movement had passed, to find either experts or laymen competent and willing to fill the position. Experts of high grade would not be anxious to serve unless they had reason to suppose that they would remain during good behavior; and citizens of marked executive capacity would make a great sacrifice in giving up their regular occupations and devoting their whole time to public work for an indefinite period. Professor Goodnow, one of the authors of the model charter, has himself pointed out that heads of city departments are likely to be recruited too frequently from professional politicians rather than professional administrators or men of proved executive talent.<sup>4</sup>

He has treated this subject in a very interesting way, and suggests in the passage already cited that only by means of boards of commissioners can permanence of tenure and popular non-pro-

<sup>4</sup> *City Government in the United States*, p. 191, et seq.



fessional supervision be secured; that single-headed departments will fall into the hands either of an official bureaucracy, or of men who make a living out of politics and from lack of adequate training are often not competent to fill these offices. In several notable instances boards of commissioners, usually unpaid, but aided by paid permanent experts, have certainly succeeded in combining the two elements in a highly satisfactory way; although it may be doubted whether Professor Goodnow is right in thinking this the only means to the end.

#### CITY GOVERNMENT BY COMMISSION

One of the chief merits of the new plan of placing the whole city government in the hands of a commission is the opportunity it affords of maintaining a corps of permanent administrators working under the supervision of the members of a board; for an elected commission is well adapted to the purpose, and its operation in this way would not interfere in the least with the other merits rightly claimed for it.<sup>5</sup> That, indeed, has been the course actually pursued in Galveston where the plan of government by commission had its origin and where its benefits have been most marked. The mayor receives a salary of \$2000 and is required by the charter to devote six hours a day to city work, but no such provision is made in the case of the other commissioners who are paid only \$1,200 and are said to give on the average two hours a day. They do not, we are told, undertake the actual management of the routine in their departments, which is done by the superintendents under them. They simply advise and direct,

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Ford C. MacGregor, in his *City Government by Commission*, lays down four essential features of the plan. First, a concentration of all power and responsibility in a small body, instead of dividing it between an executive and a legislative branch. Second, election at large and not by wards. Third, the fact that the members of the commission are the only elective officers of the city, with power to appoint all subordinate administrative officials. Fourth, the power to remove all such officials at will. None of these features is in the least inconsistent with the existence of permanent expert officials in charge of departments which are supervised but not directly administered by the members of the commission. In fact all these features, except the election at large, exist in the English cities where the administration by permanent officials prevails.

and thus men prominent in active business have been able and willing to serve the city term after term as members of the commission.<sup>6</sup> But in the later charters that excellent principle has not usually been followed. A feeling arose that the commissioners ought to be the actual administrators of their departments; and hence in Houston, the second city to adopt the plan, their salaries were doubled and they were expressly required to devote their whole time to the city.<sup>7</sup> This idea has prevailed generally, and in most of the cities which have adopted government by commission, substantial salaries are paid to its members, intended apparently to be large enough to compensate them for their whole time. A few charters, indeed, such as those of Lynn, Massachusetts, and Baker, Oregon, go as far as to provide that the commissioners shall be specifically elected by the people to take charge of particular departments.

Now election by popular vote is a very poor way of selecting expert administrators, because however good judges the people at large may be of a man's general intellectual and moral capacity, they have neither the means nor the leisure for the careful scrutiny needed to estimate his professional qualifications. An appointing body, if it does its duty, examines more evidence and considers more candidates before making a selection than the public can possibly do, and the best experts are highly unlikely to be willing to undertake a campaign to obtain the place.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, if expert administrators could be chosen in this way, they could hardly be permanent, for that is inconsistent with representing a fluctuating public opinion as expressed in recurrent elections. Nor is it practicable to have expert administrators of high grade under commissioners chosen for the purpose of administering the departments directly and paid full salaries for so doing. It would be playing false to the people by taking pay for work not done, even if the double charge of full salaries to both

<sup>6</sup> MacGregor, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. MacGregor, *City Government by Commission*, p. 49, remarks: "It is probably now generally recognized that it is easier to secure professional and technical men by appointment than by popular election."

commissioner and administrator were not prohibitive. The public cannot be expected to pay one full salary to a commissioner for administering a department and another to an expert subordinate for doing his work. Considerable salaries would, indeed, actually tend to eliminate men of large experience in affairs from the commission. A sense of civic duty will induce many such men to devote their spare time to public affairs, but if they are expected to give up everything else they cannot afford it. The bigger the man, the more he earns in his private occupation, and the less adequate the compensation for his whole time; whereas a salary which involves a heavy sacrifice for him is very attractive to a smaller man.

City government by commission has not yet been tried long enough to warrant a decisive estimate of its value. Every new plan works well for a time, because the movement for reform from which it springs brings good men to the front and places power in their hands. The real test comes in later years, when the momentum is exhausted, and the moral enthusiasm of the dawn has faded into the light of common day. The merit of the commission plan will probably depend upon the capacity it develops for providing expert administration; and that in turn involves a matter little understood in America—the proper relation between the expert who carries on the public service and the representative of the public under whom he serves.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> One of the few direct encouragements in any American city charter to the use of experts in municipal government is to be found in the new charter of Boston, which provides that an appointment by the mayor shall not take effect unless the civil service commission of the State certifies that the appointee is an expert or a citizen qualified by his character and experience for the position. This is not a very long step, and makes no provision for the proper use of experts; but it was designed, by drawing attention to the need of them, to promote their selection, and it has not been without effect.

A very incisive discussion of the function of experts in municipal government is contained in the latest Baldwin Prize Essay by Arthur Dexter Brigham.